

# Stourbridge Cricket Society

## [www.sdcs.councilcricketsocieties.com](http://www.sdcs.councilcricketsocieties.com)

**A Member of the Council of Cricket Societies**

Spring 2012

### **From the Chair**

This year is our fortieth as a Cricket Society and as you all know we are celebrating this milestone by moving away from our usual format for one month only.

We as a Committee decided that our March meeting would be in the form of a lunchtime buffet, enabling us to freshen up what we normally do and invite along a few very important guests. Indeed friends of our Society who down the years have either directly or indirectly been an important part of our forty years.

It is worth reminding you all of the part you play in creating our warm and friendly atmosphere on Thursday evenings, supporting and strengthening the growing reputation of Stourbridge and District Cricket Society.

I am frequently reminded by our guests that our meetings are some of the most enjoyable they have attended.

Our Committee are delighted in seeing growing attendances and know how important it is, especially for Terry, who permanently maintains such high standards in inviting so many interesting speakers to come along and entertain us, as you all know very often as late replacements due to cancellations.

I know that you are very aware of the importance of introducing new members to our meetings so that the growing guest list continues and that this Society will be around for another forty years, promoting and discussing our very unique and fascinating sport.

**MIKE TOMKINS  
CHAIRMAN**

#### **Who's Who in Stourbridge Cricket Society**

President Dave Nicklin

Chairman Mike Tomkins 01384 288868

Secretary Murray George 01527 576524 janeandmur@hotmail.com

Treasurer Ken Workman 01384 830881

Programme Secretary Terry Church 01384 292170 terrychurch@btclick.com

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## Ken Colesby's fond memories of Dudley cricket ground and sundry other recollections

My first introduction to the ground was as a schoolboy attending Rosland Senior Elementary School. We had no sports ground so we were allowed to play matches against other schools there. The grounds man, Mr Jones used to prepare a wicket for us between the edge of the square, which was sacrosanct, and the boundary edge on the east side of the ground known locally as the "Ewarts" side. I recall one particular match against Holly Hall School who had a quick bowler named Ken Gough and word had spread on the schools grapevine that he was very fast and as is the norm with schoolboys he got quicker with each telling so that when we had to bat against him the adrenalin was running brown. I was a middle order batsman and when I went in we hadn't reached double figures. I managed to get a bit of bat on ball but had no idea where it had gone and our umpire, who happened to be the Headmaster, with all the impartiality that the position demands shouted "run you idiot" and I think we ran three.

I would like to mention here that by the same token we were allowed to play our football matches on The Sports Centre, Dudley Town's home ground which was a great thrill for us, a ground on which the great Tommy Lawton subsequently played. In the twilight of his career he played for Notts County and Dudley Town sold a promising young player to County and part of the deal was that County would bring a strong side to play the Town and Lawton was in the squad, playing for some of the game and scoring with one of his trademark headers from the edge of the penalty area. Wonderful!

I left school at the age of fourteen and started work at Revo Electric, Tipton who had a wonderful sports ground superbly looked after by Jack Dalloway who had lost an eye in World War 2 but carried on playing cricket for Revo. My father was the first eleven scorer and he got me to operate the scoreboard in a score box that was the envy of some Birmingham League sides. At that time the only time that I got to the County ground was when there was a County game and then I would leave work at 5.30pm and nip on a number 87 bus and watch what was left of the day's play, sometimes Worcs would have bowled the opposition out and Kenyon and Outschoorn would open and The Don never played for the next day, if the ball was there to be hit played his shots and I can recall scorching cover drives and square cuts for which he was famous. Other times Worcs would still be batting but several wickets down and Reg Perks would strike a big six or two, very enjoyable!

After a while, sadly, my father became ill and I took over the Revo first team scorebook and I recall having to rush to the works canteen and phone the teatime score to the Sports Argus and then dash back to the ground, two or three minutes away and hope that the "gannets" had left me some food, bearing in mind that we were still rationed and food wasn't that plentiful.

I continued scoring for the 1st team until I went into the RAF at the age of 18 to do my National Service but I recall visiting some very impressive sports grounds such as Fort Dunlop, Stewarts & Lloyds Coombs Wood, Stewarts & Lloyds Bilston, GKN Smethwick, Henry Hopes, Chance Brothers, Hingley's Netherton and various

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others. I would add that I was paid for scoring and also a little extra for 'phoning the Argus providing much needed money at home as my father died when I was sixteen. When I was demobbed in 1949 I returned to work at Revo and as I loved tennis as much as cricket I opted to join the tennis team. We played mixed-doubles against other firms and we would finish around teatime and I would then go hotfoot to the County ground to see what was left of the first or second eleven game. At this time the great George Headley was Dudley's Pro. and we were doubly blessed as the former New Zealand Test allrounder, Bill Merritt, was in the team having become a naturalised Englishman. I still have a mental image of Headley playing the on-drive considered by many to be one of the most difficult shots. He seemed to get into a position so early and incline his body towards the onside so that he in effect played a straight drive, fantastic! As for Bill Merritt I recall many a lower order batsman looking bewildered after being bowled or stumped after playing down the wrong line to his googly.

Humour has always been part of cricket lore and witty comments by and spectators can be amusing. I remember one bitterly cold day at the County ground when the wind was from the north-east a spectator remarked that "the wind blew all the way across from the urinals, there's nothing to stop it !" Unconscious that and I recall watching a Warwickshire game at Edgbaston at the City end among the "wags" when Norman Horner, who was fielding on the third man boundary close to us, suddenly produced a bright red hankie from his pocket and quick as a flash a "wag" said " blimey Norm you've put some time in on that new ball ay yer?"

Reverting to how cold Dudley could be I remember watching a game at Worcester on a cold grey day and going to the Gents and in there was Don Kenyon and another

guy who I did not know, this guy referred to the cold and Don looked at me and said "not as cold as some days at Dudley when I've worn long johns and as many as five sweaters!"

After years of patient nurturing I finally got my wife interested in the game, mainly I think because she could watch our sons play and we started to watch Dudley 1st eleven home and away if we could get to the ground by public transport. Ron Headley captained the team and led them to a League title. This proved controversial though as we employed a battery of fast medium bowlers, Moseley, Richard Sargent, Bill Kelleher (Harry's son) and a young Joey Benjamin which resulted in slow over rates. I recall one balmy July evening we were still watching at nearly nine o'clock, the consequence being that the League amended the rules to avoid a recurrence.

Then came the fateful day when my wife and I went to the ground to watch them play Aston Unity and when we arrived the place was deserted but we spotted the fence that had been erected round the hole on the square. They finished playing that season playing all away games. Dudley Council kept promising to find a new ground but nothing proved suitable and the club sadly disbanded. Dudley Town FC also lost their ground but managed to keep going and finally have a home of their own at The Dell. The cricket pavilion was a listed building and stood in the way of the builders until it mysteriously burnt down. Mindless or mindful vandalism I've always wondered.

On a final disappointing note I enquired at the Dudley Archives but they had nothing at all about the history of the ground or any of the teams that had played there, my enquiry being made as recently as 2010.

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### Membership

It is very encouraging that after a determined effort to recruit new members, particularly by our chairman, Mike Tomkins, we have passed our century for members this year - in fact we now have 102 members. Having lost, for various reasons, over forty members in the last two years we are delighted that this year we have recruited nineteen new members. We will assume that anyone who has not paid their subscription for 2011/2012 does not wish to continue as a member and we will therefore delete their details from our membership database following the last meeting of this season.

### Speakers

This season has not been without its hiccups with no less than three speakers having notified me that they were unable to honour the commitment that they had made to speak. Luckily we were able to obtain replacements at fairly short notice and impressive presentations were made by **John Abrahams, Peter Robinson and Keith Loring.**

### Annual General Meeting

Please note that the meeting has now been deferred to **THURSDAY 3 MAY at 8pm.** The speakers for next year's programme will be announced at the meeting and it is hoped that they will include four former international cricketers, covering three Test playing nations! See you there?!

### Council of Cricket Societies

On Saturday March 10 we were represented by our Chairman and Programme Secretary at the AGM of The Council of Cricket Societies held at Edgbaston. A very useful meeting to pool ideas. We are one of only a few Societies to have increased our membership. Our Programme of speakers is as good as if not better than the majority of Societies (but we

would say that wouldn't we?). Our subs are lower than most!

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### Memory recall

Who was the last Worcestershire player to play in a Test Match for England?

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### Gripe

"I think Hamilton is ridiculous. The ropes are four metres in from the boards" Kyle Mills after South Africa's Richard Levi made 117 off 51 balls in a Twenty20 v New Zealand.

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### Stiff upper lip

"Once the decision is given you can only sit there and cry and it still goes in the opposition's favour" Indian captain MS Dhoni

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### Confused.com ?

The Morgan Report, compiled by former ICC President David Morgan, recommends reducing the County Championship to 14 matches per county from 2014 and a return to 50-over cricket.

The PCA, county coaches and ECB's own cricket committee have come out strongly in favour of a 16-match county championship and county chairmen and chief executives are in favour of keeping a 40-over one-day competition.

PS ECB has deferred a final position to allow further consumer research to be carried out.

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### Thank you

We very much appreciate the generosity of those members who have donated raffle prizes during the season.